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INFO RUEHTH/AMEMBASSY ATHENS

UNCLAS ATHENS 000164

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS
STATE FOR OES/S NANCY CARTER-FOSTER

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [ECON](#) [SOCI](#) [UNDP](#) [UNGA](#) [GR](#)
SUBJECT: Greece - Demarche on Distracted Driving

REF: STATE 6703

¶1. (SBU) EconOff delivered reftel demarche on distracted driving to Nicolaos Hatzivasdekis, Director of Road Safety and Environment in the Ministry of Infrastructure, Transportation, and Networks on February 3. Hatzivasdekis stressed that the Government of Greece takes this issue very seriously, but noted they will not be sending anyone to the March UNRSC meeting in New York because of current government financial restrictions.

¶2. (U) Article 13 of Traffic Code 2696/1999, as amended by 3542/2007 and 3710/2008, forbids the use of mobile phones, music headphones, and televisions while operating a vehicle, unless the mobile phone is on speaker-phone or used with a hands-free device. When operating a motorcycle, however, all mobile phone use is forbidden, even with a hands-free device. In the first six months of 2009, there were 33,890 violations reported. The maximum penalty is 100 Euro and a 30-day driver's license suspension. In all of 2009, there were 1,314 automobile and motorcycle fatalities, 223 (17 percent) of which reportedly involved use of a mobile phone. Hatzivasdekis acknowledged that overall traffic education in Greece is limited, but NGOs, the National Road, and the Greek police do occasionally run awareness campaigns regarding mobile phone use while driving. Hatzivasdekis estimated that mobile phone penetration in Greece is more than 70 percent, and approximately 10 percent of drivers use mobile phones while operating a vehicle.
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